



# THE AMERICAN ORGANIST

AUGUST 1956

Vol. 39, No. 8 - 30¢ a copy, \$3.00 a year

# THE AMERICAN ORGANIST

39 Kensico Street, Staten Island 6, New York - - - - - ELgin 1-0947

RAY BERRY, Editor and Publisher

T. SCOTT BUHRMAN, Founder, January 1918

Vol. 39

August 1956

No. 8

**COVER**

Gallery Divisions of the New Organ in St. James' Episcopal Church, New York, by  
*M. P. Moller, Inc.* ..... 241

**FRONTISPIECE**

Exposed Pipework in the New Organ in St. Thomas Church, New York, by  
*Aeolian-Skinner, Inc.* ..... 246

**SIXTIETH ANNIVERSARY CONVENTION OF THE AMERICAN GUILD OF ORGANISTS**

Choral Morning Prayer .....	252
Choral Techniques and Repertoire .....	260
Convention Banquet .....	266
Examinations and Music Making .....	258
Forum on Composition .....	256
Guild Festival Service .....	250
High Mass .....	261
Joint Recital: <i>Donald McDonald</i> and <i>George Faxon</i> .....	254
Joint Recital: <i>Claribel Thomson</i> and <i>Oswald Ragatz</i> .....	260
Lewisohn Stadium Concert .....	258
Milkman's Matinee .....	256
National Student Competition .....	250
Pre-Convention Events	
West Point Recital .....	248
Choral Concert in St. Paul's Chapel .....	248
Recital: <i>E. Power Biggs</i> .....	260
Recital: <i>Emily Ann Cooper</i> .....	264
Recital: <i>Charlotte Garden</i> .....	254
Recital: <i>Wilbur Held</i> .....	256
Recital: <i>Clayence Mader</i> .....	264
Recital: <i>Alexander Schreiber</i> .....	258
Recital: <i>George Thalben-Ball</i> .....	261
Recitals: <i>Pierre Cochereau</i> .....	250
Rhythm and Tempo .....	260
Sabbath Evening Service .....	264
Service of Music .....	254
"The Coming of Christ" .....	254
Trends in European Organ-Building .....	262
Worship, Architecture and Acoustics .....	263

**ARTICLES**

<i>Samuel Lewis Elmer, D. H. L.</i> .....	266
In Memoriam— <i>G. Donald Harrison</i> .....	266
My Convention Diary, by <i>Laurence Swinyard</i> .....	267

**STOPLISTS**

<i>Casavant Freres Limitée</i> .....	269
<i>Reuter Organ Company</i> .....	270

**EDITORIAL**

Conventionitis .....	247
----------------------	-----

**COLUMNS**

Directory .....	274
Recitalists .....	271
Service Lists .....	273

**PICTURES**

Exposed Pipework, St. Thomas Church, New York .....	246
Gallery Division, St. James' Church, New York .....	241
State Trumpet, Cathedral of St. John the Divine, New York .....	255
The Riverside Church, New York .....	263

**PERSONALS**

Donald Coats .....	275	Margaret Truman Daniel .....	272
Robert Crane .....	272	Charles N. Henderson .....	272

THE MACFARLAND CO., Advertising Representative  
8 Elm St., Westfield, N. J., WEstfield 2-4602—New York: REctor 2-4723

**Church of  
SAINT MARY THE VIRGIN**  
NEW YORK

▪

**ERNEST WHITE**  
Musical Director

**EDWARD LINZEL**  
Choirmaster and Organist

▪

For recitals by these players  
address  
145 West 46 St. — New York 19

**NATURAL SINGING  
AND  
EXPRESSIVE  
CONDUCTING**

by Paul W. Peterson

A timely textbook that acquaints the reader with the fundamental principles of good singing, offers an introduction to advanced vocal techniques, and includes a section on choral conducting.

Mr. Peterson is Head of the Voice Department at Salem College, Winston-Salem, N. C. His book includes extensive classified and graded lists of anthems and solos.

**156 PAGES** **\$3.50**

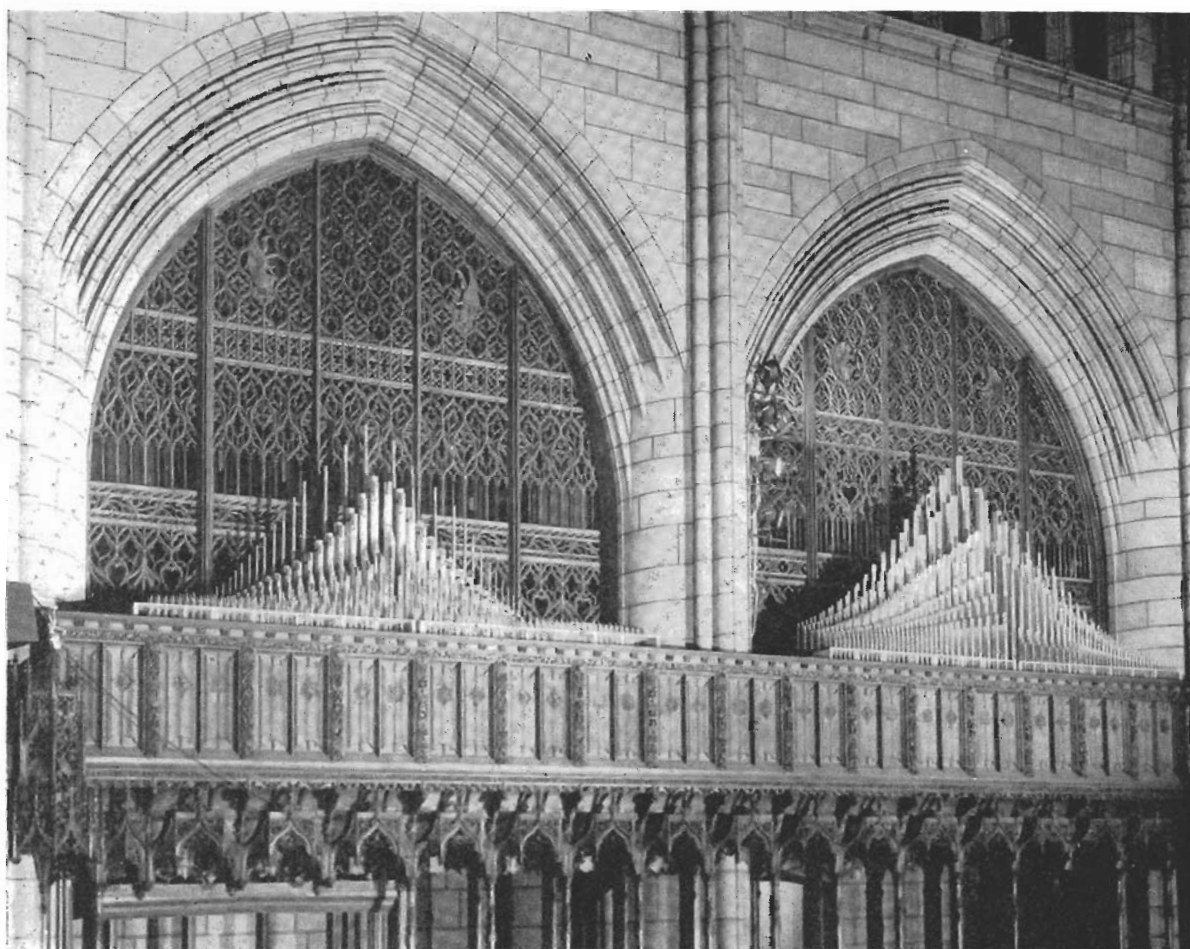
**JOHN F. BLAIR, Publisher**  
404 First National Bank Building  
Winston-Salem, North Carolina

**William H. Barnes**  
*Mus. Doc.*

Organ Architect  
Recitals

Author of  
'Contemporary American Organ'  
(Six Editions)

8111 North St. Louis Avenue  
Skokie, Illinois



# *Saint Thomas Church*

*New York City*

New exposed pipework  
of the Aeolian-Skinner organ,  
the final achievement  
of the late G. Donald Harrison

# THE AMERICAN ORGANIST, August 1956



**T A O**

**salutes**

**A G O**

THE AMERICAN ORGANIST takes great pleasure in presenting a special issue devoted to the SIXTIETH ANNIVERSARY NATIONAL CONVENTION of the AMERICAN GUILD OF ORGANISTS, held in New York City June 25-29, 1956.

## Conventionitis

**N**UMEROUS reactions become the recollection pattern for most who attend conventions. Saturated ears, aching arches, disrupted digestions, and an overwhelming desire to sleep indefinitely are a few of the "occupational hazards" with which one gets thoroughly acquainted. The impact of the magnitude of the Sixtieth Anniversary AGO Convention, which had your editor reeling throughout the week following (and not from what you're thinking, either), deserves some editorial remarks.

That those in charge planned a 5-day-long program of almost fantastic scope is admitted. That the general tenor of quality in the individually too-long programs was something to be unqualifiedly praised, is not admitted. As one friend of mine so aptly put it: "This was more a New York than a national convention." The New York scene was remarkably fully, if not exactly intelligently in all cases, displayed (I use the word advisedly).

As though previous national conventions had not more than proved the point, the New York affair ineradicably showed that the point of saturation was reached, and passed, long ago. Future convention program planners take heed! For heaven's sake give the registrants a break occasionally. The frantic efforts of program planners who obviously feel their sole predication is the utter requirement to best (?) what has gone before is as stupid as it is futile.

Let us have done with schedules affording five and six events a day. People can only take and assimilate just

so much, and the agenda far exceeded this limit.

There was another aspect shown during the convention which "unhappies" me to quite some extent. To judge from "services" presented, the concert emphasis far exceeds any stress upon worship or liturgy. Is this a true picture of what a service should be? To throw in everything but a group of trained seals is no valid basis for service planning—even for a festival service. The real *raison d'être*—and the AGO motto: *Soli Deo Gloria*—are not accomplished or fulfilled in this kind of thinking.

And what about all those who came from afar, for whom this trip to the biggest city in the world may well have been a once-in-a-lifetime event? Unless they purposely turned their backs on some events, they certainly had no time for getting acquainted with our city. I think that's too bad.

On the other hand, I have every reason to believe that those responsible for the convention programs and agenda were sincere and well-meaning, if over-zealous, in their attempt to include every conceivable type of thing of interest to registrants (of which there were some 1,500—the largest attendance in history). I take off my hat to them. They deserve great credit, individually and collectively. From the always gracious and smiling host, Dean Robert Baker, on through each and every official and person who literally slaved to make the convention possible, a resounding cheer.

The reviews and commentaries on following pages, so ably and willingly accomplished by an invited special staff of reporters have our grateful, hearty and humble thanks. TAO takes pride in these people who were so willing to give of their talents and energies that this special issue could be made possible. Mildred Andrews—Alastair Cassels-Brown—Jack Fisher—Howard Kelsey—Leslie Spelman—Laurence Swinyard—the Editor salutes you!

Ray Berry

## Sunday

## Monday

**H**OW fortunate it was that a trip to West Point was provided for those arriving early enough to attend the recital in the Cadet Chapel, played by John A. David, chapel organist. Having been quite famous for its unusual organ with well known vicissitudes, the chapel still astounds all viewers for sheer architectural beauty and incomparable setting. The building literally grows out of the side of the hill on which it stands, and Goodhue gave it that fortress-like touch which is so appropriate for a military chapel. The drive from New York to West Point wouldn't sadden anyone, either, for the entire Hudson River area is one of the most majestic parts of the land.

Sunday afternoon recitals are the popular norm for the small town folk around West Point, so conventioners plus the normal crowd absolutely jammed the chapel. Oddly, I had remembered the organ as being much more heraldic than it seemed during this program. It has everything on it except the proverbial kitchen sink (at all pitches), and yet it sounded remarkably subdued to me. It may seem a poor metaphor to some readers, but I was considerably more impressed with the windows than with the organ, while actually I think the accoutrements ought to balance.

I was singularly unimpressed with both the programming of the music and with Dr. Davis' playing. People, I think, do not attend AGO national conventions to hear such worked-over programs, and, if such occurs, we would be considerably more satisfied to hear better playing. There were indeed moments of real charm, particularly in the middle section of the Mozart, and in the Clokey *Ballade*, but the general effect to me was that of a big splash of notes. I see no reason for such unclean playing of the *St. Anne Prelude and Fugue*, for there are too many performances of it which are technically exciting. I couldn't help but think of the old days when whoever played at West Point had to spend about three days merely locating all of the stop tablets (some of which were literally under the bench), while now the magnificent new console should enable any performer to handle the gigantic instrument with great effect and musical delight.

J. F.

St. Paul's Chapel, Columbia University

Oratorio Society of New Jersey (Clarence Snyder, conductor); Ruth Diehl, soprano; Beatrice Krebs, contralto; John McCollum, tenor; Chester Watson, baritone; Rowland Snook, bass; Robert Elmore, M. Searle Wright, Frank Scherer, conductors; Clarence Snyder, organist.

Three Exhortations  
The Green Blade Riseth

Contemplation on the Crucifixion

Elmore  
Wright  
Scherer

**A**FTER the looked-forward-to reunions and greetings of early arrivers at the 1956 AGO National Convention, we reluctantly braved the intense heat of a New York City Sunday evening and located ourselves in Columbia University's St. Paul's Chapel for a stunning program of choral music.

As the music progressed, so did the heat, and I am certain there was no one in that congregation who did not wish unlimited laurels to the New Jersey Choral Society for their magnificent presentation amid such sweltering conditions. Having shed jackets, coats, and every other permissible garment within at least the first five minutes, not one of us would have wanted to exchange places with the heavily robed chorus. I have always read in the instruction books that such conditions are not conducive to good singing, but the performance by the Society defied all of this by being one of the finest I have ever listened to. Their precision was re-

markable, dynamic control arrestingly masterful, and their interpretative powers were not at all inhibited by these good requisites.

The tone quality of the Society is well balanced, and all of their effects were seemingly attained with the utmost grace. After having lived in and about New York for seven years, it seemed amazing to me that neither I nor anyone else I met had heard of this Society before—although this is much less to our credit than to theirs, I am sure—but, if this performance is to be taken as a criterion of their abilities, future glory is surely in store for them.

In regard to the above, I am implying especial laurels to the conductor of the Choral Society, Mr. Clarence Snyder, for, although none of the performance was conducted by him, the singing is surely the result of his competent training. The fact that the chorus could achieve so fine a program under three different conductors in one performance is even more to their and his credit. Not even all symphony orchestras can do this, and they usually have more experience in the matter. Mr. Snyder played all of the accompaniments on the organ, and I must say that his playing was as interesting and masterful as the performance of his chorus.

If I had arranged the program, I should have exchanged the second and third oratorios. Searle Wright's *Green Blade Riseth* would have made a natural *finis* and climax to the *Contemplation on the Crucifixion*, by Frank Scherer. After all, Easter did follow the Crucifixion, and the Scherer piece would have gone down better and not seemed so tedious (this tiring quality was not due to the heat).

Elmore's *Three Exhortations* began the program with well aimed effect; they exhibit good writing, excellent singability, and are extremely expressive of the text—a very fortunate selection for the concert. Wright's "Green Blade" is a good piece, although a bit studied, and has great charm, particularly in the Paschal Dance, called "Hilariter." Both Elmore's and Wright's compositions exhibit an extraordinary sensitivity to form and structure, not to mention effective part-writing.

Scherer's "Contemplation" reached its best self in the *recitatives*; most of the chorus work seemed rather hybrid to me, was vague in form, and gave the effect of mildly modernized Richard Strauss.

It would not do to skip mention of the conducting of these works; each composer for his own composition, and it was a genuine treat to observe such excellent work. I could hardly believe that three such splendid conductors could appear in one program. Incidentally, the first big laugh of the convention occurred at the end of Elmore's composition: we heard what sounded like a cipher from the organ and thought, "Oh, dear"—but this whistle rose to a wail as fire engines approached, and passed; then the place resounded with a massed chuckle as we realized the chorus had just sung the words, "Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire?"

I am going to risk a criticism by stating that the convention risked disaster in locating this program in St. Paul's Chapel. I felt the setting was entirely inappropriate, for its size, acoustical properties, and organ are distinctly out of character as an oratorio prop. Although I once doubted it, I now agree that Lowell Beveridge was correct in emphasizing liturgical music and Renaissance motets there. If the New York City Chapter AGO wished to preview the convention with such a big bang as this oratorio concert, it should have been heard somewhere else. A less esoteric audience than the conventioners would have scathed the Choral Society for a jumbled mass of sound, when actually they gave remarkable precision and diction. Also, much of the singing and organ accompaniment seemed unduly loud and boisterous, when in reality the excellent reverberation of the building merely amplified it some five times what it ought to have been. The soloists were perhaps the most out of place, with their operatic type of singing which does not belong in such a setting. Ruth Diehl was the only one who seemed really cognizant of this matter, and even her tasteful style was

somewhat distorted by so much reverberation.

Three cheers to the New Jersey Choral Society, to the composer-conductors, to Clarence Snyder, to the sweltered audience—and a raised eyebrow to the planners who misplaced this program in St. Paul's Chapel. J. F.

**T**HE technical ability of the 12 contestants in the finals of Student Competition in Organ-Playing was impressive. They played with accuracy, remarkable assurance and poise. However, this technical skill too often seemed to be an end in itself, rather than a means of expressing music. Too many of them showed the results of being pushed technically far beyond their musical understanding. Speed and brilliance should not be the aim, but rather musical expression. Such contests develop one side of an organist's talent and leave undeveloped other aspects that are needed by church musicians. I wonder if these contests are in keeping with the purpose of the American Guild of Organists? L.P.S.

As unofficial spokesman for the several judges, of which he was one, Dr. Spelman accepted TAO's invitation to make comment upon this competition. As a pedagogue of distinguished reputation, his remarks bear thought for all who would have connection with future efforts of similar nature. The Editor.

St. Thomas Church, New York: Pierre Cochereau  
Suite No. 2  
Symphony No. 2  
Prelude and Fugue on the name "Alain"  
Symphonic Poème: Evocation  
Tryptique Improvisation on given themes

Clerambault  
Vierne  
Duruffé  
Dupré

**P**IERRE COCHEREAU, distinguished organist of Notre Dame, Paris, was heard twice, on consecutive days, in recital. As a pre-convention event, he dedicated the new Schantz organ in Sacred Heart Cathedral, Newark (see TAO, April 1956), Sunday evening, June 24. The beauty of the cathedral was matched by playing which was obviously "at home" in a large structure. Aside from the opening Bach *B minor Prelude and Fugue*, M. Cochereau's program was of French composers from Vierne forward to a four-movement *Symphonic Variations* on the "Pange lingua," which displayed the recitalist as composer.

M. Cochereau's recital, which was part of the official opening of the AGO convention held in St. Thomas Church, followed the customary opening remarks and greetings by appropriate officials. In this performance, M. Cochereau devoted himself entirely to French composition. The artist dedicated his recital to the memory of the late G. Donald Harrison, this being the last opus of a great organ builder.

In retrospect, these two performances, coming so closely together, were not perhaps the best scheduling for the artist, in consideration of music chosen at least—and most especially for the many who attended both recitals. Quite simply, it was just too much French—music and playing. This is not to say Frenchmen should not lean heavily on the music of their own country. Rather, that two programs too close together engendered a surfeit.

Cochereau is a mature artist, in full command of his considerable talents, who is as loyal as several of his colleagues in presenting the French scene. I've at times wished U. S. organists playing in foreign countries were as loyal to our native composers in like proportion.

M. Cochereau's Newark improvisation was a considerably more closely knit entity than that in New York, which will not be construed as adverse comment on the artist. Just how often can a well-woven structure be made from three disparate themes? Despite this, and the obvious obstacle of one of these themes beginning with G-D-H (B flat) (Mr. Harrison's initials), Cochereau produced a mood-provoking structure of enormous scope based on the themes submitted by Robert Baker, Seth Bingham and

Clarence Watters, which carried to heights the tradition of improvisation so dear to the French. According to reports from some sitting in the rear of St. Thomas Church, the sudden inclusion of the west gallery "Trompette-en-Chamade" was startling to say the least.

I could scarcely finish comment on this opening event without mentioning that never has an AGO convention started off with such a bang! I hasten to add, for those not in attendance, that the "bang" was some blasting of sub-level rock in the excavating going on just to the south of the church. The effect was as effective as it was perfectly (if accidentally) timed. R.B.

St. Bartholomew's Church, New York

Guild Festival Choral Service: Calvary Church, St. Bartholomew's and St. Mark's-in-the-Bouwerie Choirs; Harold Friedell, director-organist; David Hewlett, organist.

Suite Brève	Langlais
Magnificat and Nunc dimittis in D	Sowerby
Jesus so lowly	Friedell
Requiem Mass	Duruffé
Coronation Te Deum	Vaughan Williams
Fuge, Kanzone und Epilog	Karg-Elert
(organ, violin and women's voices)	

**T**HE participating choirs in this service were those of Calvary Church, David Hewlett, director; St. Mark's-in-the-Bouwerie, George Powers, director; and St. Bartholomew's, Harold Friedell, director. Mr. Friedell directed the combined choirs and played the service.

For the prelude, David Hewlett gave a most satisfying performance of the *Suite Breve* by Langlais. This seemed to be continuing from where we left off, for those of us coming from Pierre Cochereau's improvisation earlier in the afternoon.

The Byzantine setting of the church was appropriate for the romantic service that followed. The processional hymn, *Leoni*, sounded stirring. Responses and chanting were highly unsatisfactory for anyone to take as a model, since they were drawn out excessively at the end—a feature similar to a driver's stopping for every green light. With time plus *rallentando*, the last syllables took three times the lengths of those opening the sentence; no one would ever dream of this in spoken declamation, and if we don't speak this way, then the music is receiving too much importance.

Sowerby's *Magnificat* and *Nunc dimittis* were splendid. The first anthem, *Jesus so lowly*, by Friedell, was very charming and simple. The second anthem, a setting of the *Requiem* by Duruffé, was most lovely, though from where I was sitting the sopranos overbalanced the basses. It is an appealing work, not particularly dramatic, yet very much in the tradition of Fauré sweetness. It is based on plainsong themes; on this account, I couldn't help regretting that the work wasn't more apparently mystical.

The greeting from the Rector was most cordial. He stressed the value of good music in worship and hoped that those present would relay his appreciation to their own churches.

Ralph Vaughan Williams was represented by his arrangement of "Old Hundredth" and his setting of the Festival *Te Deum*. The postlude, *Fuge, Kanzone und Epilog* by Karg-Elert, for organ, violin and women's voices, was ably directed by David Hewlett, and I also enjoyed the warm and sensitive playing of Eugenie Dengel. A.C.-B.

# Tuesday

St. Thomas Church

Choral Morning Prayer: St. Thomas Church Choir of boys and men; William Self, organist and master of the choir; Edward A. Wallace, service organist; David R. Fuller, organist.

Chorale in B minor

If ye love Me

Hosannah to the Son of David

For Thee, Jehovah

Comest Thou, light of gladness

Te Deum laudamus in B flat

Benedictus in A

Adoramus te, Christe

Vere languores nostros

Alma redemptoris Mater

A story fair

Grieve not the Holy Spirit

Nunc dimittis

I will not leave you comfortless

Hymn of praise

Finale (Symphonie Romane)

Franck

Tallis

Weelkes

Bach

Herzogenberg

Willan

Stanford

di Lasso

Lotti

Palestrina

Dickinson

Noble

Gretchaninoff

Titcomb

Self

Widor

**S**OON after arrival at the convention, nearly everyone was aware that St. Thomas Church represented several "firsts": the new and splendid organ, a new rector, new organist and master of the choristers, new headmaster of the choir school, and lastly, the new construction going on outside the church—on both sides of it.

Having exploded the convention's opening recital with a big bang next door, we continued, in successive events there, to be startled time and again with the blasts, until we finally marvelled that they did not knock the organ out of tune—or us, perhaps. But, explosions or no, everyone I met was duly appreciative of the magnificent new organ and with the church in general.

The fact is, St. Thomas is rather an ideal church. Architecturally, it is a triumph of the well-known Goodhue firm, the windows are equally monumental, it has great resources for continued magnificence, and the choir school is one of those fortunate and rare institutions seldom to be found in American churches. The church has consistently maintained good music leadership, from Dr. Noble through Dr. Candlyn, to the present, with Mr. William Self. The organ is probably one of the most significant instruments of our time, and is a tribute to the church, to Mr. Self for his foresight in such matters, and to the late Mr. G. Donald Harrison.

There was only one minor explosion to mar the grandeur of the Franck *B minor*, played by David R. Fuller, and thus the service was off to a most impressive beginning. The present choirmaster fortunately has instituted silent Processions for the choir, and thus it entered in churchly dignity. From this, the whole service proceeded to the end in a most sincere manner. To be true, the service was festive, and in one sense was designed to exhibit the choir, but an effect of reserve and devotion was yet maintained throughout.

For those who may be reasonably unfamiliar with the Anglican Service, may I point out that this was a Choir Office of definitely English type, which implies mainly that the music is for the choir and not necessarily for the congregation, excepting the hymns. In such choir-services, those responses, which theoretically ought to be participated in by the congregation, are sung by the choir in 4-part harmony, the Canticles are sung in anthem form, and so on. These customs naturally derive from the Choir Offices as they are sung daily in English cathedrals, and in their English setting quite logically ignore congregational participation, for generally there is no congregation present, at most a handful. When the Office is sung in such a setting as the Guild convention, it might be argued that more congregational participation might be encouraged by way of unison Responses, congregational-chant Canticles, and so on; but, this being a festive service, as well as including many non-Anglicans among the worshippers, the effect of choir emphasis was not altogether out of order.

I would, however, question the eclecticism of the music programmed. With such an incomparable building, and with so progressive an organ, the music was not all on a par with these two factors. Instead of achieving a catholicity in music, the Victorian Canticles and anthems near the end seemed to date the whole idea of the music instead of meeting the progressive and universal aspect of the organ. Thus a musical and almost philosophical conflict.

In this light, I also question the doubling of the bass notes in the Choir Responses, and in certain of the Renaissance motets. It is wonderful to have such good low basses, but when they double in the wrong places, the style is distorted. It was most refreshing to hear the Herzogenberg "Comest Thou," being one of the few pretentious, Romantic unaccompanied anthems in existence worth the trouble it takes to prepare it. I hope more good choirs can add it to their repertoire. All of the Renaissance music was well done, although I could have stood a bit happier pace in nearly every one of them.

The choir has a good balance, and (everyone please take note) Mr. Self uses boy altos exclusively—not a contra-tenor in the bunch. The boys have what might be described as a Viennese tone, being extremely bright and somewhat edgy; I prefer a more flutelike tone, but there are all types of tone and this is Mr. Self's present and good production.

The hymn "St. Anne" was taken at a funereal and unsingable pace; this was ornamented by an introduction, interludes, descant, free accompaniments and trumpet fanfare, all by Norman Coke-Jephcott—a dazzling embellishment which struck me as a walloping lot of a good thing, but most impressive. Mr. Self informed me that the hymn-tempo was slowed down to the most acceptable playing of the fanfare for the gallery Trompette-en-Chamade, which I still think makes it unsingable.

It was a refreshing break to attend this service in St. Thomas, for it was the only church service in the convention which maintained a religious atmosphere. The "greatest show on earth" might describe the effect achieved by other churches, and I'm thankful that St. Thomas at least held out for the spirit and slogan of the Guild: *Soli Deo Gloria*.

A word of thanks might very well be in order for the Vestry of St. Thomas Church, in that they, too, were responsible for this service. Since the choir school had disbanded earlier, for the season, the Vestry brought back the entire choir, at a great financial expense (some of the boys had to return from considerable distance), and so we see that the service was produced at great effort. Congratulations to Mr. Self for his fine work, to Mr. Fuller for the Franck, and to Mr. Edward A. Wallace for his fine playing of the service.

J. F.

**Recapture the Saint Thomas Choir of Boys and Men, William Self, Organist and Master of the Choristers**

**The Service of Morning Prayer, above, has been specially pressed on ONE L. P. recording, available at \$6.00**

**Make check payable to —**

*Saint Thomas Church*

1 West 53 Street

New York 19, New York

The Riverside Church: Donald McDonald and George Faxon

Kyrie, God, Holy Spirit

Jesus Christ, our Saviour

We thank Thee, God

Introduction, Passacaglia and Fugue  
Donald McDonald

Fantasy

Prelude III

Scherzo Fantasia

Gregorian Rhapsody

Toccata

Bach

Bach

Bach

Willan

Fromm

Proctor

McKinley

Titcomb

N. P. Faxon

George Faxon

**D**ONALD McDONALD and GEORGE FAXON, sharing the resources of the organ in the Riverside Church, gave to the convention a highly individual musical experience. McDonald's clean, crisp, sparkling Bach—his sense of proportion and scope in Willan's "Introduction, Passacaglia and Fugue" rate him in my opinion as one of our most promising young artists, once he has added to his already well-developed talents a greater maturity of approach to music, as such. Nonetheless, he makes a recital exciting. I hope his apparent sense of direction will not be swerved, nor will he allow it to be misdirected.

Faxon's difficult and to some extent thankless task of performing a whole program of manuscripts by present-day American composers was accomplished with his customary aplomb and keen musicianship. I personally favored the playing over the music about 8-to-1. I've no intention of making comments on the pieces singly other than to remark that one becomes more and more convinced that too many American organ music writers today reflect a restlessness which is rather disquieting—a mode of writing in which massive blocks of complex sound have almost completely taken the place of lucid, straight thinking in manner and forms of composition proven acceptable (as guideposts at least) and best since the time of Bach. This does not imply any impedance to progress. It does indicate a far greater need for a more complete understanding of the past, that the future may be built upon it logically and intelligently. So-called modernism, for its own sake, is not necessarily synonymous with music which is music, truly.

R.B.

James Memorial Chapel, Union Theological Seminary

Chapel Choirs of Union Theological Seminary; Ifor Jones, director;  
Robert Seavers, dramatics director.

The Coming of Christ

Holst

A Mystery (Choral Drama)—text by John Masefield

**T**HE COMING OF CHRIST, a verse play by John Masefield with music by Gustav Holst, was presented by Union Theological Seminary under the direction of Ifor Jones, musical director, and Robert Seaver, dramatics director.

This play, performed in Canterbury Cathedral in 1928, was the first of a series of plays presented in the cathedral in the belief that the art of drama should serve Christianity. (Luther thought along similar lines when he converted tavern songs into hymns because he didn't see why the devil should have all the best tunes.) In one sense, it constitutes a revival of the old Morality plays in which actors personified virtues and vices, and, in another sense, the old Miracle plays which dramatized Biblical stories. The first source results in characters called The Power, The Sword, The Mercy, The Light, and Anima Christi, while the second leads to the inclusion of incidents at the Incarnation like the coming of the Magi and the shepherds. Naturally, it has a message—a wonderful message—that on account of His great love for us, God freely chose to come among us and risked complete rejection that mankind might be saved.

The music is simple and effective, using the idiom of plainsong and folk tunes. The accompaniment of the plainsong is austere and makes an interesting contrast with, for

example, the Durufé *Requiem*, heard on Monday. The play opens and closes with a trumpet call in which there is a suggestion of *Adeste fidelis*. The texture of the singing was not always clear, but the interpretation was light and sensitive. Sheila Sutton's singing was vital and thrilling, but the bass was terrible!

Considerable pains were obviously taken to get the words across; however, much was lost before it reached the back of the hall, which was unfortunate considering the importance and beauty of the words.

The main thing, apart from the enjoyment, is the hope that others will feel inspired to introduce this play, or similar plays, into their communities. The following list is taken from the program notes:

The Coming of Christ	John Masefield
Murder in the Cathedral	T. S. Eliot
The Zeal of Thy House	Dorothy L. Sayers
Cranmer of Canterbury	Charles Williams
Thor with Angels	Christopher Fry
	A. C.-B.

Cathedral of St. John the Divine: Charlotte Garden

London Suite

Stanley-Chase

Sonata Pian e Forte (for brasses)

Gabrieli

The Joy of the Redeemed

Dickinson

Fanfare

Wyton

Choral (Symphonie Romane)

Widor

Introitus, Choral and Fugue (organ and brasses)

David

**C**HARLOTTE GARDEN, one of this country's leading recitalists, was presented in a highly unusual program in the Cathedral of St. John the Divine—a program which the acoustics of the building largely defeated. This is not to say that organ music cannot be heard, and played, successfully in this particular vastness, for I have heard others cope well with the highly specialized approach demanded in so reverberant an environment. I had the impression the artist, which she is, had formed her tonal, technical and registrational design at the console, and without enough thought and understanding of what was happening a sixteenth of a mile away (this cathedral is an eighth of a mile long).

The Stanley "London Suite" (as played from a manuscript arrangement by Gilman Chase) was considerably disappointing and left me feeling unfulfilled. The same might be stated for the Gabrieli music for brasses, in which true antiphonation simply was not achieved, for the listener. In fact, I was so filled with confusion that I departed after Alec Wyton's "Fanfare," written for this organ by a man who thoroughly understands the demands of so high an acoustic. This piece (which is a mighty effective thing), incidentally, was dedicated to the late Mr. G. Donald Harrison, who, upon learning this, remarked that this was the one and only piece of music ever dedicated to him. It was Mr. Harrison who had designed and installed the State Trumpet in this cathedral.

I only regret that Charlotte Garden's more than ample talent and fine musicianship for the most part was utterly wasted. I would hear her under different conditions. R.B.

The Riverside Church

Riverside Church Choir; Louise Natale, soprano; John Fleming, baritone; brass and tympani ensemble; Richard Weagly, director; Virgil Fox, organist.

Toccat and Fugue in D minor

Bach

Sine Thou art come down

Bach

Come sweet death

Bach

Prelude and Fugue in B minor

Bach

(played in memory of G. Donald Harrison)

Credo (first performance)

Bingham

Suite for Organ, Opus 5

Durufé

Dona nobis pacem

Vaughan Williams

**T**HE service in The Riverside Church was outstanding for the standard of organ playing and musical direction. The opening organ prelude was played in



The State Trumpet  
created by the late G. Donald Harrison  
for the Cathedral of St. John the Divine

memory of G. Donald Harrison, by Virgil Fox, and consisted of all Bach compositions. Masterly technique, musicianly phrasing and very fancy registration characterized the performance. Of the two choral works sung, the first was a *Credo* (first presentation) by Seth Bingham, a highly interesting work of a dramatic nature. It was written, and per-

formed, with great conviction.

This was followed by Duruflé's *Suite, Opus 5*, of which the second movement seemed to have an atmosphere of *Au clair de la lune*, and the last movement to consist of harmony and texture with a dash of excitement—and negative melody, which was probably intentional but gave the impression of

dryness of invention.

The main work in the service was *Dona nobis pacem* by Ralph Vaughan Williams, which was composed in 1936. Text is in six sections, contrasting the supplication, "Grant us peace," with "Wars and rumors of wars," in three poems by Whitman and one by Bright, and finally, the Promises of Peace taken from the Scriptures. The soprano solo in the first section was sung with true legato, diction, feeling and beautiful tone—a superb performance. In the first Whitman poem, "Beat! beat! drums!—blow! bugles! blow!" sung dramatically by the chorus, the trumpet solo was particularly effective. The organ accompaniments were flawless, though at times they tended to be a little loud. The second poem, "Word over all," is set as a flowing baritone solo which was most effectively sung; the composer elected to repeat the opening words at the end of the poem, perhaps for emphasis or possibly for formal balance. Moments in the movements were suggestive of *The Serenade to Music*, and the sixth movement, with its tranquil mood at the opening, and its entries of a falling theme, each rising above the last, compactly suggested the closing measures of the *Fifth Symphony*. Throughout both choral works, the choir sang magnificently, with precision, sweep, and interpretation.

It may not be out of place to repeat here the comparison made between these choral works by Seth Bingham, himself, at the Forum on Composition, at which time he pointed out the difference in the two texts: the *Credo*, dramatic and quickly changing—*Dona nobis pacem*, long, flowing and unchanging.

After the Benediction, Mr. Fox played us out with what on the service sheet was referred to as a Silent Recessional. Members who attended the evening must have felt that here at The Riverside Church is to be found some of the best music in New York.

A.C.-B.

#### Paramount Theatre

Milkman's Matinee: a special event for organists who liked to stay up late, and whose hair was not too long.

**S**QUARE pegs in round holes might be the description of most organists faced with the monster generally referred to as the theatre organ. But, while most organists are square and only some are not, there was a large and expectant audience which swarmed into the Paramount Theatre for what was dubbed to describe us (oddly) as "milkmen." (A good many of us *do* milk things with extraordinary thoroughness, at times, but apparently not too many took offence at the title, so the place was enthusiastically boisterous.) I might add that the points of interest in Times Square and vicinity do offer enough to keep interesting people busy until 2 am, so I was not surprised to see such a happy and large crowd.

We were given a good and lively demonstration on the powerful organ by Ray Bohr, who is one of the organists at the Radio City Music Hall. We were not at all bored, either, by the able and amusing antics of Searle Wright, who plays the theatre organ well and has a fine ability to entertain. Before going further, it should be mentioned that George Wright, who was to have been the star of the morning (!) was prevented from performing because of a broken shoulder resulting from an automobile accident recently.

The party picked up with a promising roar at the entrance of Virgil Fox, the organist of New York's famous Riverside Church, who promptly added his usual zest and fun. The famous musician was almost immediately huzzahed by whistles and yells to the effect that he was commanded, if not requested, to try the old organ and make it dance; many requests were called out from all points in the theatre, not the least of which was from a loud, distinct voice from the balcony, who screamed, "Come, sweet death!" Quite apparently, the person belonging to this loud voice had always wanted to hear Mr. Fox try his famous interpretation on a *real* theatre organ. But Mr. Fox graciously played

himself down and called upon various people in the audience to play, until finally he gave in as a good sport and played a bit for us.

One of the most hilarious bits of fun was provided by a boy named "Roy" who gave us the funniest possible performance of the "Habanera" from *Carmen*. Searle Wright gave the accompaniment for this.

It would have been very educational for all who think an organist is or must be square to play a theatre instrument, because we were delighted to hear the Paramount beast amply explored and shown off by such masters (and I'm not kidding) as Searle Wright, Virgil Fox, and Richard Purvis. Pierre Cochereau was even persuaded to try his hand at it and he turned out to be delightfully round and a darned good entertainer.

Mr. Purvis, it seemed to me, was most at home on the instrument, while all the others were good; but it was a man from Wichita, named Ray Kleve, who proved to be the real artist. When he touched the keyboard, music leaped into action, and the whole theatre audience sat spellbound. After his performance, there seemed to be very little else which could have further enhanced the demonstration; even the loud voice from the balcony didn't seem to want any more favorites, so we adjourned to early morning affairs.

J. F.

## Wednesday

#### Central Presbyterian Church

Wilbur Held, playing the 1957 AGO test pieces.

Prelude and Fugue in E minor (Cathedral)

Prelude on "Toplady"

Sonata No. 3

Toccata and Fugue in D minor

Air with Variations

Allegro risoluto (Symphony No. 2)

Bach  
Bingham  
Mendelssohn  
Bach  
Sowerby  
Vierne

**W**ILBUR HELD gave a fine recital and set a good example in rhythm, technique, phrasing and registration. The Moller organ sounded well balanced and compact and deficient only in the low pedal register. The Prelude on "Toplady" didn't have much to say, nor was there much interest for me in Variations on "Komm suesser Tod" by Schreiber which Mr. Held added at the end of his recital, while, on the other hand, the Sowerby *Air with Variations* was much more compelling.

There were looks of appreciation and amusement when a roll of thunder coincided with the first pedal point in the Toccata, but if this was God playing the timpani then Mr. Held mis-timed his climax a measure too late for the most resounding peal of all.

A. C.-B.

#### Central Presbyterian Church

Forum on Teaching Methods and Materials: Harold Gleason and Catharine Crozier, co-chairmen; Mildred Andrews; Robert Noehren; Leslie Spelman; Vernon de Tar.

TAO regrets that the report of this event which was promised had not arrived by press time. However, it may be reported that the forum was so successful that it was repeated, by request, early Friday morning of convention week.

#### St. James Church

Forum on Composition and its Relation to Church Music: Otto Leuning, professor of music, Columbia University

**T**HE Convention's Forum on Composition, with Otto Leuning, chairman, and Robert Crandell, Paul Creston and Seth Bingham as panelists, was one of the

several 3-at-a-time simultaneous events.

The first question propounded by the chairman took a skillful cross section of the panel. He quoted statistics indicating the large difference between the percentage of contemporary music as performed in Baroque times (very high) and present day programs (very low). He asked for reasons to account for the fact that many successful secular composers had not written sacred music and that contemporary music largely by-passed church music. Members of the panel gave the following answers:

*Mr. Crandell:* It's the effect of taste of congregations.

*Mr. Creston:* The church is no longer a center of art—composers write for audience and applause—secular commissions frequently interrupt sacred composition, as he, a composer, well knew.

*Mr. Bingham:* The church is not a force at present, but it has had recessions and recoveries before and has been around 2,000 years. In previous times composers felt compelled by an inner inspiration to write for the church—the hope of recovery lies in a general return to belief in God.

The chairman pointed out that there were alleged to be 75-million churchgoers in the United States, which is a large audience.

For the second question, the members were asked what qualifications they thought necessary for a church composer. Mr. Crandell quoted a clerical friend who expressed that his personal choice would be for a heathen organist, who was a good musician, in preference to a Christian who was a poor musician, from which Mr. Crandell concluded that Christian belief was not an essential, but that imagination and musicianship were. Mr. Creston thought that music must be inspired by and written for the church, though texts should not necessarily be limited to the Bible. He thought that the two greatest obstacles were the Pastor and the congregation. Chairman Leuning thought that the art of vocal writing was essential. Mr. Bingham noted the terrific amount of junk coming off the presses—well written but dead spiritually; the worst sinners were often the best composers who wrote instrumentally for voices.

Later in the meeting, the following remark from the floor brought down the house: "A composer composes for the publisher, who publishes what people want, and the people want *junk!*" One lady protested that if the publishers published good music, it would be performed, which remark overlooked that a notable publisher publishes good and bad as policy, using proceeds from the bad to pay for the good.

Also from the floor was the suggestion that if churches would play the music of local composers, standards of vocal music would go up. This promptly brought an open invitation for composers to send new works to the First Unitarian Church, Oklahoma City, where it already is their policy to perform new works.

Prof. Gilley, of Annapolis Naval Academy, asked whether the teaching in musical institutions did not lay too much stress on secular writing, which precipitated the last question that we had time for, namely, "Hasn't there been over emphasis on effective writing for secular as opposed to sacred music?"

*Mr. Crandell:* If I can sing it, anyone else can.

*Mr. Bingham:* My conscience is quite clear, I am invariably delighted to teach sacred music if I have a chance, but the inclination is generally lacking in students.

In his summary, Mr. Leuning mentioned the large audience, together with many capable directors, and an evident lack of tie up with the best composers. He concluded by asking church musicians to contact musicians interested in church writing.

A. C.-B.

Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church

Examinations and Music-Making: William B. Mitchell, professor of music, Columbia University

**A**MID sultry humidity at 3 pm, Mr. William B. Mitchell helped to undampen our spirits with a delightful and entertaining lecture on the philosophical aspect of the Guild Examinations, in relation to music-making in general. I emphasize that his was a philosophical, not a theoretical, approach. There is little need to comment on his lecture except to say that it was delightful and that I agree with every word of it.

His points were these:

1. That intellectual "junk" is unnecessary (e.g.: A 16th century composer's second and middle names);
2. That we should acquire the ability to handle our information, not just store it;
3. That the Guild is primarily an *examining* organization,
  - a. Some pieces required are somewhat ludicrous,
  - b. Pieces should really assess a student's ability,
  - c. 18th century musicians composed as well as performed—and we should do the same today;
4. That our education should not end with examinations;
5. That music-theory should justify itself only as it becomes a part of practice;
6. That the Guild Exams ought to include some test of a student's analytical abilities.

J. F.

St. James Church  
Alexander Schreiner  
Symphony No. 3  
Symphonie Mystica  
Church Sonata

Vierne  
Van Hulse  
Sowerby

**A**LEXANDER SCHREINER proved with the first phrases of his recital that he is still one of the most satisfying and competent musicians in the organ recital field. He has a fine technique which allows every phrase to be heard, the music thus to be unfolded, and his understanding of the music is so mature as to reward every listener with a considerable musical experience.

I can think of very little comment to make except that his recital was absolutely wonderful. I should question the programming of three such heavy works, all so similar in structure, on a 4:30 pm convention recital, during a month when New York City is likely to be exhaustingly hot. In effect, we heard three massive organ symphonies in a row, two of them made of five movements each.

J. F.

Lewisohn Stadium  
New York Philharmonic-Symphony; Oratorio Society of New York;  
William Strickland, director; Claire Coci, George Thalben-Ball, Vernon de Tar, organists.  
Concerto in B flat (Hallelujah)  
Magnificat  
Concerto in E  
Te Deum laudamus

Handel  
Bach  
DeLamarter  
Dvorak

**T**HE Lewisohn Stadium concert, featuring as soloists, Claire Coci, organist of the New York Philharmonic-Symphony, and George Thalben-Ball, organist of the B. B. C. Orchestra, London, was the one convention event which the New York press recognized to much extent, which is perhaps logical, all things considered as related to the total music scene in this great metropolis.

Handel's "Hallelujah Concerto" opened the evening and in some ways came off fairly well, despite the outside orchestral forces employed which, in point of historic style, threw things quite out of kilter. Thalben-Ball, I do not choose to believe, is precisely enamoured with electronic instruments, and consequently, his portions of the work did not come off with any particular life or sparkle. It was fine playing, yet sounding uninspired. This may have been due to the amplification, or to any number of other causes.

Claire Coci's performance of the DeLamarter Concerto was a *tour de force* and she was the star of the evening.

Musically, the work is not much more than romantic slush, but I must say the artist got everything out of it there was to be had. She was far more at home with the instrument than her British colleague, and took advantage to far greater degree of its tonal possibilities.

Space does not permit comment of the other works on the program other than to remark they were acceptably done if you don't mind out of shape size in your Bach, and an almost passionate concept of a *Te Deum*, the flamboyancy of which is anything but worshipful. William Strickland is a dynamic conductor who held his forces together with great skill and musicianship.

I must say that the Allen instrument used sounded about as much like an organ as any instrument could under the rather adverse auditory conditions that are an outdoor auditorium. Placement of the speakers made for best possible blend with the other forces.

R.B.

## Thursday

Hunter College Auditorium

E. Power Biggs, instrumental ensemble.

Balletto del Granduca

Double Concerto in G (for two organs)

Concerto No. 10 in D minor

Fantasia for Organ (K. 594)

Adagio and Rondo for organ and quartet (K. 617)

Festival Sonatas for organ and strings

(K. 328, K. 241, K. 336)

Sweelinck

Soler

Handel

Mozart

Mozart

Mozart

**E.** Power Biggs, playing the portable Schlicker organ, displayed a delicate style of playing well suited to music of the Classical period, and the organ a pure and flute-like instrument which is nearly ideal for chamber music. As a matter of taste, the instrument seemed to me to be a little colorless, and the pedal reed, which buzzed like "a cockchafer in a boot," to borrow a phrase from Mattieson, to be a little too extreme for reconciliation, but the general effect was gentle and as charming as a carol.

With the exception of the viola player, who was wooden, the ensemble was delicate, lyrical, strongly rhythmic and yet serene. The happy mood induced in the audience by the lovely music bubbled spontaneously into delighted laughter at the predicament of the stage hand, who carried out a music stand in one hand and a chair in the other, all the while fighting a losing battle with the music, which threatened to fall off the stand—and finally did.

The concert was a refreshing change because it was chamber music, and finely performed.

A. C.-B.

Christ Methodist Church

Lecture: Rhythm and Tempo, Curt Sachs, professor of music, New York University and Columbia University.

**A**S this was Prof. Sach's birthday, his audience greeted him singing the famous serenade for such occasions. He thanked us impressively from the pulpit. The speaker informed us that he had been asked by the committee to talk about his new book, *Rhythm and Tempo*, published by W. W. Norton & Co. He did not think it would be too interesting if he simply read it out, so he proposed to lecture on rhythm and tempo in the XVIII century.

He pointed out that, in the XVIII century, notation had a limited value and that the meanings of the notes were vague: even experts do not agree as to exact values. One reason for this was that the *royalty* and *bourgeois* of the times imposed their own tastes on music, which led to apparent contradictions. It was considered good taste to be indirect, and, to cite the case of the *appoggiatura*, it was misprinted on purpose. Before a half-note, it was worth a

quarter-note and received the accent—before a dotted half-note, the auxiliary received two quarter notes; the accent was put on the *wrong* note, but this was easily explained by the use of *appoggiaturas* in the figured bass, where it was essential for the continuo to know the true harmony note. Practice differed between different nations. To the Italians, "equal notes are equal," while to the French they were played in a ratio of 3:2. Bach wrote sometimes in the French style, but also was strongly influenced by the Italians.

In the case of the dotted particle—which simply meant the lengthening of the preceding note and the shortening of the second—for a *March* or *Minuet* the second note was made as short as possible, while for an *Adagio* the ratio was 3:2. In the case of the dotted particle against a triplet, the second note coincides with the third note of the triplet; this was a form of shorthand.

In the case of the double-dotted particle, Prof. Sachs said that we got into deep water and added, with a flash of his spectacles, that it is easier to swim in deep water.

On the subject of *rubato*, he stated categorically that it meant being steadfast in one hand and free in the other. Even in Chopin, the left hand never yields.

Most challenging of all his statements was on the subject of tempo. "Slow tempo is the gift of the XIX century—Bach played extraordinarily fast." The Germans were faster than the French. Metronomes were used in France in the XVIII century; metronomic terms were recorded from 1698 on. The *Minuet* in France was taken at 70 *for the measure*. "Look at XVIII-century pictures," he said. "They are light; XVIII-century music must be light."

The question of slowing down a cadence is a matter of taste. Bach is better without a *rallentando*. Finally, Prof. Sachs pleaded with us not to call the XVIII-century music "old." Music is as old as mankind. Such an impressive and challenging lecture could not but cause one to make a mental note to follow up the subject in the book. What higher praise is there than that?

A. C.-B.

Assembly Hall, Temple Emanu-El

Forum: Choral Techniques and Repertoire, Vernon de Tar, moderator.

**T**HIS forum, ably moderated by Vernon de Tar, included four speakers: Conrad Veld, Margaret Hillis, Mildred Marshall and Alec Wyton. Mr. Veld's opening remarks stressed a very serious approach to selection and performance of choral music. Miss Hillis stressed seeking the full expression of music in the music itself, warned to be wary of gimmicks. Miss Marshall turned the whole room into a riot with her delightful exhibit of phonetics, good and bad (the latter, being such as "garry me bag to ole Virginny"). Whereupon Alec Wyton described the forum as a four-movement symphony, with Miss Marshall's talk as a magnificent *Scherzo*. He then concluded the forum with fervent pleas for choirmasters to present the best music to Junior and Boy Choirs, saying that they are much brighter than we think they are. Space will, unfortunately, not permit a fuller development of the other splendid points brought out in the entirety of the forum, so charmingly presented by the four speakers.

J. F.

St. James Church

Claribel Thomson and Oswald Ragatz

Fugue in E Flat (St. Anne)

Concerto in D minor

Fantasia

Pavane

Litanies

Bach

Vivaldi-Bach

Noehren

Elmore

Alain

Claribel Thomson

Concerto No. 5

Herr Jesu Christ, dich zu uns wend

Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland

Pantomime

Pastorale

Telemann

Bach

Bach

Jepson

Roger-Ducasse

**E**VEN a somewhat cooler day, which brought us again to St. James' Church, was not necessary to aid the splendid recital by two fine performers. From the opening phrase of Miss Thomson's half of the program, she held her audience in that type of attention which illustrates all the arguments in favor of careful phrasing, steady rhythm and intelligent registrations. She allowed her music to breathe before phrases, and then welded the music into the sincerest expression of what was there.

There is a tremendous force and intensity in her playing, until I am sure everyone present would rank her among the best, on a par with other great women organists, so popular for the qualities I have mentioned above. The myth of inferiority in the fairest sex is fast being permanently exploded by the organ playing of such women as Claribel Thomson.

We had hardly recovered from the beautiful playing above when Oswald Ragatz began his half of the recital. His technique, like that of Miss Thomson's, was exceptional, with meticulous attention to phrasing, nuance and style. His taste in registration was somewhat more interesting than Miss Thomson's, although this may have been simply because of the music played.

Registration here, at any rate, was merely a logical means to an end, not a vast color-pot or an end in itself. The only low point in the program came during the big part of the Roger-Ducasse, which I should say was too fast. The only person I have heard play it sensibly is Marilyn Mason, and she takes it nearly twice as slow in this section; the effect is still electrifying, and the cleanness of notes is even more exciting than a faster clip. Mr. Ragatz maintained the pace throughout, in spite of the middle section.

In the Sowerby piece at the end, he delighted me by being

the only performer I have heard who made clear the main theme, beginning in the pedal—nearly everyone else makes the octave leap sound like one note.

My opinion is that this was the real high point of the convention, as far as recitals went. Both performers are among the best I have ever heard.  
J. F.

Temple Emanu-El: George Thalben-Ball  
Suite in D  
Air and Allegro in A  
Prelude and Fugue in E flat  
Sonata on the 94th Psalm  
Arioso  
Le Moulin  
Variations on a Theme of Paganini  
Fete

Stanley  
Russell  
Bach  
Reubke  
Middelschulte  
Cellier  
Thalben-Ball  
Langlais

**G**EORGE THALBEN-BALL, organist of the British Broadcasting Corporation, and one of England's leading recitalists, presented a recital on the newly done-over organ in Temple Emanu-El. This badly cooped up instrument, originally installed by Casavant, and rebuilt by Austin Organs, perhaps sounds about as well as it could with so wretched a placement, proves magnificently what happens when organ sound is forced to speak from one space into another.

Completely at home in the music of his countrymen, the Stanley and Russell pieces proved interesting "openers." His Bach was well considered but, for American tastes however, a bit dull.

Thalben-Ball gave magnificent dimension to the Reubke in an obviously orchestrally based conception which I found most interesting. This piece is so overworked as to be almost in the bromide department. I must say that the Middelschulte pieces are scarcely the best American compositions extant, and suffered especially following Reubke. The Cellier work was excellent "bridge" music, and the performer's own work is a rather fascinating show case on a well-known theme in which the composer-organist accomplished his own requirements with apparent ease. The concluding piece was in my opinion rather anti-climatic.

Thalben-Ball is an accomplished artist whose abilities are as apparent as they are understated by him. The marriage of recitalist and instrument was eminently successful—the evening a rewarding experience.  
R.B.

## TWO NEW PUBLICATIONS

### Organ

#### Background for a Worshipper

Betty Louise Lumby

One dollar

### Voices

#### PALESTRINA

#### Missa Jesu nostro Redemptio

- (a) Latin Text
- (b) English Text

In ordering specify which text is wanted as these are separate editions.

Easy to medium difficulty.

Fifty cents a copy.

Write for catalog

## SAINT MARY'S PRESS

145 West 46 Street, New York 36, N. Y.

## Friday

Church of St. Paul the Apostle

High Mass: The Paulist Choristers; the Rev. Joseph R. Foley, choirmaster; Frank Campbell-Watson, organist.

It is no earthly summer's ray

Proper of the Mass

Mass in honor of St. Paul

Credo I

Mihi autem nimis

Lead us, gentle teacher Paul

Foley

Gregorian

Campbell-Watson

Gregorian

Wetzler

Wesley

# CLAIRE COCI

## Studio of Organ

Private lessons for select advanced pupils, coaching for concert work; organ practice facilities available.

175 West 72nd Street, New York 23, N. Y.

Head of Organ, Daleroze School of Music, David Mannes Music School, New York

ONE of the objects of a Guild convention—national, regional or state—is to present the best that can be offered in the name of model events. Not a large crowd, therefore, but an interested one heisted up from comfortable beds to attend this Mass. (In fact, it was not a little dismaying to think our arrival had been accomplished at some effort, only to see that the ubiquitous chorus of caterpillar tractors was well under way and that the riveters and other workmen had been at work long ahead of us—all this by way of some more new construction near and at Columbus Circle).

Thus, New York continues to grow and rise, but apparently the musical and liturgical practices of this Roman Catholic Archdiocese do not. Perhaps it was the absence of exciting explosions such as those at St. Thomas Church, but the service did not get off to a very good beginning. I had wondered what was to be the result of the processional and recessional hymns, listed in the convention booklet, and they turned out to be just as I had feared: the same, lamentable effort to accompany the choir in and out of what is the chancel as is found in most other churches. Choir and organ in St. Paul the Apostle are located at the East end of the building, rather than in the more customary rear gallery.

The Paulist Choristers are a direct derivative, genetically speaking, of those singers trained under Father Finn; however, they are not so inherently similar as one would logically expect. Their tone is good, with rather an English-sounding, flute-like quality, and the whole choir has good effect. I did not care for the men's singing half so well as that of the boys, but then only a Scrooge would disallow for vicissitudes in attendance, extra singers for the occasion, summer performance, and so on.

Withstanding the fact of singing difficult music so early in the morning, the choir sounded good indeed for all purposes. The Ordinary of the Mass, except for the *Credo*, was sung to a setting by the organist, Frank Campbell-Watson, which is an elaborate effort of rather hybrid style; I was impressed most of all by the *Gloria*, which had some rather effective multi-part-writing for the boys (who sang it very well). The Proper of the Mass was listed as Gregorian, but there issued forth an elaborate, accompanied composition for the Gradual which was definitely not Gregorian as music history describes such. Those parts which were sung to Gregorian chant were all accompanied by the most non-liturgical registrations of massed strings, lugubrious wads of tone, well manipulated by swell-shades. There is nothing wrong with masses of tone and swells, except when they are interjected into the wrong music.

The most effective bit of music in the service was the offertory motet, by Wetzler (whom, unfortunately, I cannot identify), and for a brief period I felt that we had arrived at an appropriate mood of liturgical worship. This did not last, however, and we had to observe and listen to the wretched recessional hymn as the choir filed out.

It is increasingly dangerous to generalize upon almost anything these days, but I am going to put forth the thesis that this service seemed to (generally) frankly copy several of the worst features of music and method which have become so prevalent in Anglican worship in this country. The lamentable processional and recessional hymns, which are being openly discarded by the Anglican Joint Commission on Church Music; the fact that organ-izing every bit of choral music in the service, even to the point of ruining Gregorian chant-form—all such bad theatrics—led me to be excessively disappointed in the result of this service.

I give due thanks to the Church of St. Paul the Apostle, to the Paulist Choristers, Father Foley and Frank Campbell-Watson, for inviting the convention to this service. However, I must honestly submit that if this is the most exemplary effort possible by the Archdiocese of New York, there is much to be done in the way of liturgical and musical improvement.

J. F.

Waldorf-Astoria Hotel

Lecture-Demonstration: Trends in European Organ Building, D. A. Flentrop.

TRENDS IN EUROPEAN ORGAN-BUILDING was the subject of a lecture by D. A. Flentrop. Dr. Robert Baker, Dean of the New York City Chapter AGO, welcomed the eminent organ builder from Holland, expressing his pleasure that Mr. Flentrop could be with us and remarking that he couldn't understand how Mr. Flentrop ever found time to build organs because he was always welcoming Americans who went to see him. The speaker replied, expressing his pleasure at renewing friendships with his American friends.

His first point was that modern Dutch and European organs are not copies of old instruments. They are different instruments, which are built along the same principles but not in imitation. The term "baroque" is incorrect as applied to a modern organ.

Outlining essential factors rather than differences in building techniques, Mr. Flentrop stressed that all the points must be taken together and properly emphasized.

He advocated tracker action and slider chests. With slides, he demonstrated the modern technique of using one valve, which is rectangular and long, in place of many pallets, and showed that the channel created a reservoir of air that had a distinct and unifying effect on the tone. Although tracker action imposes a limitation on the size of the instrument, this is a challenge for "in limitation the master is manifest."

The case is essential for the best sound. It acts as a resonator and blends the stops. The organ must be placed in the open. The architect should cooperate with the organ builder, and in any case, the organ builder should have the last word.

In outlining the stoplist for a 19-stop organ, Mr. Flentrop defined the Principal as the main chorus, and the Prestant as the set of pipes "standing in front"; he preferred the term Prestant. This is the disposition which he wrote on the board:

Manual I	Manual II	Pedal
8' Prestant	4' Prestant	16' Prestant
4' Prestant	2' Prestant	8' Prestant
11 $\frac{1}{3}$ ' IV Mixture	1' III	2' III
8' Flute	8' Gedeckt	8' Bourdon
2' Flute	4' Flute	4' Flute
8' Trumpet	8' Quintadena	16' Fagot
	8' Krummhorn	

Scaling is very delicate and must be adjusted to the acoustics of the building. As a guide, the Bourdon in the Pedal is narrow, the 8' and 4' Flutes on the Great narrow and the 2' a little wider, the 8' Flute on the Positiv wide. The width is not necessarily doubled at the octave but according to the acoustics of the building. Nicking is undesirable as it removes harmonics natural to lovely sound.

There is no need for many stops if each of them is sufficiently interesting. In closing, Mr. Flentrop reiterated that tracker action lends more security and sensitivity than other systems.

The group was then privileged to hear Mr. Donald Willing play a few variations in demonstration on the small one-manual organ that had been set up in the lecture room. All the sounds were interesting and remarkably varied for such a small instrument. The stoplist of the demonstration organ was: Prestant 4', Gedeckt 8', Quintadena 8', Rohrflöte 4', Gamba 2', Cymbel. There were no pedal ranks, only "pull downs."

A. C.-B.



The Riverside Church, New York  
The Organ by Aeolian-Skinner, Inc.

St. Bartholomew's Church  
Lecture-Forum: Worship, Architecture and Acoustics, Ray Berry

ONE of the more scholarly discourses at the recent AGO convention was Ray Berry's discussion of the problem of church acoustics. His chief plea was for more reverberant buildings, with a minimum of acoustical padding. In the course of this eloquent plea the following verbal gems were especially noted and I quote them, if somewhat out of context.

Stylistic character has nothing to do with worship—Society makes churches, not architects—Define a church's needs to an architect, then let him solve the problem—The emotional content of historical form is not applicable to current problems—Psychological effect of space on the worshipper—Don't confuse reverberation with echo—Reverberant space is necessary for uplifting worship—Music is an auditory, not a visual factor.

I was especially impressed with the injunction to present the architect with problems, not solutions. Most churches are prone to give answers rather than questions, with disastrous results; and we have plenty of churches across the land to prove it.

Mr. Berry was joined, after his talk, by Bertram Y. Kinzey, his colleague on the AGO Committee on Architecture and Acoustics, for an active question-and-answer forum period.

In his concluding remarks, Ray Berry offered his and Mr. Kinzey's services to AGO chapters, to bring the message of acoustics to chapters, area architects, clergy and church building committees anywhere in the nation—to bring and present information where it is needed, on home ground.

H. K.

Anyone wishing information on booking Mr. Berry or Mr. Kinzey, for lecture-forums, with slides and other similar aids, may secure this by writing the TAO offices. The Editor.

Church of St. Mary the Virgin  
 Recital by the winner of the 1956 AGO national organ competition.

**F**MILY ANN COOPER, of Arkadelphia, Arkansas, a pupil of Robert Ellis at Henderson College in the same city, was the winner of the 1956 national competition for students. Her recital, played in the Church of St. Mary the Virgin, was as follows:

Allegro (Sonata 6)	Bach
Largo y spiccato (Concerto in D minor)	Vivaldi-Bach
Fugue a la Gigue	Bach
Cantabile	Franck
Scherzo (Symphonie 2)	Vierne
Introduction, Passacaglia and Fugue	Willan

Miss Cooper's recital was a *tour de force*. She played with the freshness and vitality of youth and with fine command of the instrument. Some small points that caused one to think for a moment were the *rubato* in the opening and recapitulation of the Trio Sonata, and the phrasing of the *arpeggio* passages; the use of 16' stops with sub-couplers when using full organ; the fly that walked over the measure in the Willan *Fugue*; and the slightly staccato Clarinet in the Vierne.

Some large things that gave satisfaction were the technical cleanness of the difficult Trio; the colorful registrations; the effervescence and dash of the *Scherzo*; and her general artistry and musicianship.

It is worth mentioning, for the benefit of those who haven't heard the organ in St. Mary's, that the instrument is mounted high and speaks straight into the church; the effect is bright and clear, and, to many, one of the loveliest sounds of its kind in New York. A. C.-B.

St. Bartholomew's Church  
 Clarence Mader  
 Fantasia und Fuge, Opus 41, No. 1  
 Orgelkonzert, Opus 29  
 Portrait Cycle  
 Symphony No. 3

Raphael  
 Micheelson  
 Mader  
 Vaughan

**C**LARENCE MADER, the west coast's sole recitalist representative, played a program of contemporary works on convention Friday in St. Bartholomew's Church. The aridity basic to the Raphael and Micheelson pieces leaves me equally so insofar as comment is concerned. Mr. Mader's own *Portrait Cycle* contained some highly interesting compositional thought even though I join Mr. Laurence Swinyard in that "Of Understanding" was not, precisely. I cannot help but feel that Mr. Mader's ideas of children and of youth make me less than hopeful for the world of tomorrow. Again agreeing with Mr. Swinyard, the Vaughan *Symphony* simply is not.

As will be noted elsewhere in this issue, a question looms distressingly large as to just what the present-day composer is attempting—what he is trying to prove. I do not pretend to sit in judgment but I do feel that music is no different today, essentially, than it ever has been: it will never be music which lasts into the future until it goes considerably further beyond mere mental aberrations. The wedding of head and heart in compositional thinking has so far as I know not approached the divorce court.

Clarence Mader is a gentleman (and I mean gentleman, too) whom I would hear playing a more orthodox program. His talents more than deserve this. I have the greatest admiration for his willingness to accomplish the program he played but I wish he could have delineated his considerable ability in music more agreeable to listen to, music which is more than *avant garde* for the sake of being that, only.

R.B.

Temple Emanu-El

Sabbath Evening Service: Emanu-El Choir; Kathryn Oakes, soprano; Diane Griffiths, contralto; William Hoffmann, baritone; Robert Baker, director-organist; Herman Berlinski, organist.

Sortie de la Loi  
 Prière universelle  
 Prelude  
 Two Preludes  
 Two Preludes  
 L'cho Dodi  
 Bor'chu and Sh'ma Yisroel  
 Mi chomocho  
 Va'anachnu  
 O may the words  
 By the rivers of Babylon  
 Va'anachnu  
 Kiddush  
 Adon olom  
 Benediction Responses  
 Chorale and Toccata on "Leoni"

Milhaud  
 Milhaud  
 Berlinski  
 Jacobi  
 Bloch  
 Berlinski  
 Zoellner  
 Bloch  
 Jacobi  
 Weiner  
 Saminsky  
 Jacobi  
 Traditional-Saminsky  
 Warren  
 Berlinski  
 Bingham

**F**ROM the opening notes of the first of the organ preludes, all of us in the congregation in Temple Emanu-El knew that the service was going to be musically rewarding. Dr. Robert Baker chose some extremely effective and new music for the preludes, and he played this entire recital with the utmost artistry and superb effect. I could not help but marvel at the fact of Dr. Baker's excellent effort having to be sandwiched in with all of his other extensive duties, and so I should say that his accomplishment showed real genius.

Not to be mundane in speaking of perennials, I have never heard the Temple organ sound so well; and this is not simply because Dr. Baker has been playing there for several years (and was chiefly responsible for the rebuilding of the organ), but rather because he is supremely musical and musicianly.

The choir at the Temple is equally as good as the organist. It is unfortunate that most of us never hear a good choir sing a Jewish Service, since it has become customary for these services to be sung by solo quartets (most of which are better suited to the opera house than the Synagogue); but, if there has been any doubt that such a good choir can exist and sing such a service, it was quickly dispelled by this performance in the Temple. They are reputedly one of the finest choral groups in New York City. Their tone, balance, blend, dynamic control and all such mechanics are superb, and their interpretative powers show a magnificent understanding of what they are singing. It was thrilling to hear such excellent performance.

Liturgically, my impression is that music in Reformed Jewish Worship is dominated by performance rather than participation. The congregation does a great deal of reading, most of it responsorial, but I have never heard any successful hymn singing or the like, and I understand that when this is tried it is not eminently rewarding. There were some moments when I felt that the organ music during solemn, liturgical moments of priestly functions smacked vaguely of what we in Christian liturgical churches call "mood music," but Dr. Baker performed such in the best of taste, not milking it for every drop.

Amid the favorable comment on all sides, apparently I was the only one who felt this, so obviously the concert emphasis of all the music in Temple Emanu-El was vastly successful, even in this light. Many cheers for a most rewarding experience.

J. F.

Waldorf-Astoria Hotel  
Convention Banquet and Closing Festivities: Anna Russell, comedienne.

Celery	Supreme of Fruit Princesses	Olives
	Almonds and Nuts	
Prime Ribs	of "Blue Ribbon" Beef	Chasseur
	Champs-Elysses Potatoes	
	Tiny Stringbeans Saute	
	Bibescot Glace New Waldorf	
	Golden Rhum Sabayon	
	Petits Fours	
	Demi-Tasse	

NO self-respecting convention could be complete without a banquet. Of course, whether or not this is the logical closing affair, is a moot question. In this instance, the success of this particular event would have been as complete no matter when it was scheduled.

The Waldorf had no difficulty whatsoever in upholding its reputation for serving fine food in elegant fashion. Of especial interest (appreciation was resoundingly shown), was the grand entrance of the 60th anniversary cake, borne on the shoulders of a couple of stalwarts, and followed in red-coated lengthy procession by waiters bearing a super luscious dessert.

Speeches, praise be, were non-existent. The words of

host Robert Baker, President Elmer, Claire Coci covered all territory needing recognition, were expeditiously done so the main attraction of the evening could arrive on stage.

Anna Russell is, I trust, too familiar an entertainer to require description. While hampered slightly by an accompanist unfamiliar with her manuscripts and routines who yet accounted ably for himself, she had not the slightest trouble in reducing her many hundred listeners to a weak and screaming mass. I would place my seal of approval on Anna Russell as being the best possible manner of assisting in the digestive processes of a large meal.

While she is quite accustomed to audiences who scream their insistence for encores and repeated bows, I rather doubt she has ever had a more discerning audience which could so expertly assimilate and appreciate much of her astringently pointed satire. I might mention that the one man who sat at the next table to me and who never once cracked a smile during her performance should consult his nearest psychiatrist. Obviously, he is not quite human.

As all of us left the tables in the main ballroom of the Waldorf, saying our goodbyes to friends and all that, I rather imagine many of us had the same feeling: even though we might be dead on our feet, we had been exposed to a really terrific five days. I choose to believe that, in most ways, the marathon was worth it. R.B.

---

## In Memoriam — G. Donald Harrison

MEMORIAL TRIBUTES to the late G. Donald Harrison, immediately following his tragic death on June 14, 1956, were the following:

At the service in St. Thomas Church, New York, held simultaneously with the funeral service on Long Island, William Self, organist and master of the choristers, played before the reading of the Burial Office, Bach's "My heart is filled with longing," "Blessed Jesu at Thy word," "Lord, hear the voice," "Christ lay in the bonds of death," and Bonnet's "Reverie in D Flat." Bach's "Hark, a voice

sayeth" was played following the service.

The choice of the Bonnet work was because of Mr. Harrison's longtime fondness and friendship with the great French organist.

A memorial recital was played by Joseph Elliott in St. Paul's Chapel, Trinity Parish, New York, Wednesday noon, June 20, consisting of works of Bach and Brahms, especially chosen to reveal the brilliance of the organ which was rebuilt in 1950 by Mr. Harrison. Thousands of listeners and worshipers from the Wall Street area have heard the organ since that time, at daily services and the mid-week organ recitals.

---

### SAMUEL LEWIS ELMER, D. H. L.

On Sunday, June 3, President Merrill J. Holmes of Illinois Wesleyan University, Bloomington, Illinois, conferred upon AGO President S. Lewis Elmer the degree of Doctor of Humane Letters. The presentation citation, read by Carl Neumeyer, was as follows:

Long recognized as a leader in the field of sacred music, Mr. Elmer served for thirty years until his retirement in 1937 as organist and choirmaster of the Memorial Presbyterian Church of Brooklyn, New York. Early in his professional career in 1901 he became identified with the American Guild of Organists and has played an increasingly active role in that organization until the present time. In 1943 he became the president of this national organization. His outstanding leadership and wholehearted de-

votion to this group, which is dedicated to the advancement of church music in America, are largely responsible for its remarkable growth in numbers and influence during the period of his presidency.

In 1947 Mr. Elmer was honored by being made a Fellow of Trinity College of Music in London. He is a member of the Executive Committee of the National Music Council and serves on the boards of numerous choral organizations in New York City.

Mr. President, I am pleased to present Mr. Elmer to you for the conferring of the honorary degree, Doctor of Humane Letters.

The same honorary degree was conferred upon Joseph W. Clokey on May 31 by La Verne College, La Verne, California.

# My Convention Diary

Laurence Swinyard

The American Organist expresses a debt of gratitude to the distinguished Editor of the English journals, **Musical Opinion** and **The Organ**, for his highly individualistic and perceptive commentary on the recent AGO convention.

Sunday, June 24.

6:00 pm. Picked up my registration at the Waldorf-Astoria with tickets for all events kindly placed at my disposal by the New York Chapter AGO whose guest I am. The program is terrifying in this heat! I shall need wings to get around all the events and by the time the week is over I shall probably have acquired them—plus a harp! (Nearly 2,000 organists! Talk about Daniel in the lion's den!)

8:30 pm. To St. Paul's Chapel, Columbia University, for a pre-convention concert by the Oratorio Society of New Jersey. Very resonant building which ruined diction of otherwise magnificent choral singing. The matter of performance was less engaging than the manner. Robert Elmore's "Three Exhortations" is pretentious music, constantly striving after modernity through dissonance but making its greatest effect in one quiet diatonic passage. Organ accompaniment was too orchestral, ignoring the inherent medium of the instrument. There were some magnificent outbursts of choral and organ sound, a duet for chorus and organ—nay, a duet, in which the organ won. The best of the three numbers did not publicly acknowledge a debt to Walton's "Belshazzar" but it should have done. In "The Green Blade Riseth," Searle Wright derives his inspiration from Walton (he says so in the program). The four numbers of the work, although strikingly contrasted in style (Resurrection Paean—magnificent choral climaxes; Paschal Dance—sparkling vivacity; Chorale—sincerely moving emotion; Alleluia—short barbaric finale), have an affinity which owes much to the use of a plain-song theme borrowed from Walton's "Henry V" John music (I still think it's the Agincourt Hymn, Mr. Wright!).

The third and last item was Frank Scherer's "Contemplation on the Crucifixion" which is not so much a contemplation as a dramatic narrative of the Passion, told in alternation of chorus and narrator, the choral portions acting as commentary. The narrative is in free recitative, more reminiscent of opera than of oratorio, but a pleasant change from the stereotyped neo-classical pattern, developing here and there into pure lyricism, both in the vocal line and in the organ accompaniment. Nevertheless the work as a whole lacked cohesion and was overlong for its lack of a personal idiom and tension. Mr. Scherer's music is highly derivative, varying from Schubert and Mendelssohn to Karg-Elert and Reger with a touch of Messiaen and Langlais here and there. The organ did everything that one would expect a Donald Harrison instrument to do (and a good deal more than it ought to have done, now and then).

Monday, 10 am.

To Calvary Episcopal Church for the finals of the Student Competition in organ playing. Each student seemed to present a Bach work and a modern piece, varying from Sowerby to Messiaen. I heard four of them and understood there were 13 or 14 competitors. (The judges must be gluttons for punishment!) Technical proficiency was very high, but the students seemed more at home with the moderns than with Bach. It is far easier to paint in color than to draw in black and white.

4:30 pm—To the official opening and recital, by Pierre Cochereau, at St. Thomas Church. It embarrassed me somewhat to face nearly 1,500 American organists to convey my messages of goodwill from across the sea, but my reception here has been so friendly that the rows of smiling faces put me at my ease. Under Cochereau's skilled hands and feet, Donald Harrison's last achievement in organ design produced the right voices for a program of French music, from the quaint Bayenne tapestry outlines of the Clerambault "Suite" to the reverberating tonal masses of Dupré. The recitalist improvised with great skill, ingenuity and musicianship on three themes submitted. The improvisation was perhaps over-long at the tail end of a large-scale recital, but it is always a pleasure to listen to this art, today perpetuated only in the French school and long neglected by the Anglo-Saxon race. I fancy we should have a better standard of organ composition in England and America if we taught improvisation.

Tuesday, 11 am.

Choral Morning Prayer at St. Thomas Church. What a delight to hear a well-trained choir of boys and men, but strange to hear boys singing the alto line after the customary sound of the English male alto voice. Boys have a kind of dead flattish tone in this register. I enjoyed particularly the unaccompanied early English and Italian—Tallis, Weelkes, di Lasso, Lotti and Palestrina. The singing was comparable to good English cathedral standards (I wonder what William Self will say when he loses that wonderful solo boy?). One jarring note was struck by Norman Coke-Jephcott's "Introduction, Interludes, Descant, Free Accompaniment and Fanfare" to Croft's "O God our help." The descant was quite good but the fanfare (no doubt designed for the "State Trumpet") was the worst piece of bombast in bad taste I have ever heard.

2:30 pm. Joint organ recital by Donald McDonald and George Faxon in the Riverside Church. What a shame to build a magnificent 5-manual instrument and then bury it in the walls so that the tone has to fight its way out through closely-grilled window spaces. Mr. McDonald played Bach, using baroque registration discreetly when necessary; and also that magnificent "Introduction, Passacaglia and Fugue" by Healey Willan, overcoming the fiendish difficulties with ease. Mr. Faxon gave an all-American program, most of which was rambling, incoherent and restless. Modern American organ music seems to be based mainly on sonorities in tonal masses, rather than on individual choruses or colors characteristic of the instrument. I get bored of having massive chunks of sound hurled at me. Mr. Faxon's best piece was the "Gregorian Rhapsody" of Everett Titcomb, which was more akin to organ style. His fine technique was shown off well in a "Toccatina" by Nancy Plummer Faxon which, unfortunately, was just another toccata.

5:30 pm. Cathedral of St. John the Divine. Recital by Charlotte Garden. Any organist who plays in St. John's should be paid danger money lest the player's reputation be damaged by the shocking acoustics of the building with its 9 seconds of reverberation. It is often impossible to tell that a change has been made in registration until some time after the event has occurred and some of a previous higher dynamic has died. I therefore refuse to comment on this recital. Even the novelty of composition for organ and brass was ruined by that acoustic muddle which never allowed one to hear one chord at a time. I observe that the cathedral is not yet finished. In my opinion, New York should pull it down and replace it with a building in which music makes sense! [By the same token, I assume Mr. Swinyard would insist with equal intensity that St. Paul's, London, with its alleged 12-second reverberation environment, should also be replaced with an acoustic logical for speech and music. The Editor.] Why do so many

American churches shut out the daylight with too much ornamental stained glass and so obscure their often beautiful proportion? Is gloominess next to holiness in the U. S. A.?

Wednesday, 10 am.

The President's breakfast was somewhat late (no doubt owing to the "hangovers" from the Milkman's Matinee!). The business meeting was an eye-opener to me with its reports from regions, states and chapters of a very keen and flourishing activity amongst organists all over the United States. One thing that has surprised me is the large number of women members of the AGO, many of them as deans of chapters or state chairmen! Fine players some of them are, too. In England, a fair proportion of women accompany the organ clubs on their Saturday afternoon organ-hunts, but they are mostly the wives of organists. We call them "console widows." From the reports of the several area conventions with their organ and choral workshops, I have picked up many ideas to suggest for adoption in England. I think the Incorporated Association of Organists has something to learn from the AGO.

1:30 pm. I was very disappointed with Wilbur Held's recital of the AGO test pieces at Central Presbyterian Church. He played all the notes but almost entirely without phrasing and with no imagination whatever in registration. The music did not impress Mr. Held and the recital was certainly no inspiration to any student preparing for his examination. For such a demonstration only a front-rank recitalist should have been chosen.

3 pm. The Forum on Teaching Methods and Materials would no doubt have been interesting if I could have heard a word of what the speakers said, but in the absence of a public address system, I succumbed to the heat and left early.

4:30 pm. At Alexander Schreiner's recital I heard the first real organ playing of this whole convention. No chunks of sound hurled at my head, but a reasoned registration, historically appropriate, and obviously selected with great care from that somewhat curious Moller specification. Phrasing, particularly in the pedal line and the left-hand inner parts, was meticulous so that the music took shape, each phrase had beauty of form. Whether in building up the architectonic majesty of the Bach "Passacaglia," or painting the vivid canvases of van Hulse and Vierne, Mr. Schreiner showed himself to be an artist as well as a technician, and many young American recitalists might well copy his style.

8:30 pm. This is the first time in my life that I have ever attended an open air concert as in the vast Lewisohn Stadium with its amplified sound. I don't think I like it. For one thing, I have been campaigning for years against the use of huge orchestral and choral forces in such music as Bach's "Magnificat" and Handel's Concertos. What is the use of a highly trained choir of 40 if it is amplified to sound like 400? And why play Handel's organ concertos (true chamber music) with full Beethoven orchestras including trombones? I don't think my countryman, George Thalben-Ball, was at all happy on that Allen organ! Claire Coci did much better with the frankly-romantic DeLamarter work. Pleasant concert music this for the open air on a summer night. Soloists and chorus sang well but Mr. Strickland will have to get on to the question of tone production. Again here was that sense of strained voices and forced tone, and the microphone seems to emphasize the harsher upper harmonics of the human voice.

Thursday, 1:30 pm.

E. Power Biggs and an instrumental ensemble at the Hunter College Auditorium. Careful! I'm going to write a rave notice! After being bat-

tered by various varieties of full organ, almost drowned in various varieties of "baths of sound," I came up to breathe and to consciousness on Thursday afternoon. No English stomach can get used to the large American meals and the parallel carries over into music. To a mind suffering from mental indigestion as a result of a surfeit of great chunks of tone from Aeolian-Skinners, Casavants, Mollers and other 4- and 5-manual organs, Mr. Biggs' recital had an astringent and purgative effect. The little Schlicker portative was heard with ease in the large auditorium and was a perfect blend and balance for the instruments. Mr. Biggs has obviously studied his historic periods well and succeeded well also in evoking many contrasts of tone from his tiny instrument. What made the music come alive was the careful phrasing, the variation of touch—whether of hands or feet. High praise is also due to the six instrumentalists who played—not to us but to the composers and for themselves—and, consequently, with E. Power Biggs, they really made music.

8:45 pm. I heard my fellow countryman, George Thalben-Ball, play this same program on the Royal Festival Hall organ. It sounded better in London where the organ has a chance to speak, instead of being buried as it is in Temple Emanu-El. G. T.-B. is undoubtedly our finest British recitalist. It was a pity that the audience could not see him playing that pedal study.

Friday, 10:30 am.

Seth Bingham presided ably over the lecture-forum on "Music for the Small Church" and evidently you have in America the same problems as we do on choir organization, training and music selection. But it seems to me that you tackle those same problems in a much more business-like manner. Church music with you is a highly organized matter and, judging by the success of your junior choir movement, your methods pay dividends. (Unfortunately no choirmaster or organist in England has the amount of money at his disposal which is spent by even the small churches in America.)

3 pm. To St. Bartholomew's to hear Clarence Mader, one of the leading west coast organists. Somebody told me that Mr. Mader is one of the *avant garde*, which, I suppose, means that he has a predilection for modern music. His program, well played on a fine instrument, did not appeal to me. So much of this modern dissonant composition is merely modern and merely dissonant. Odd scraps and phrases float up, heading nowhere, except perhaps to a climax full of sound and fury, signifying nothing. Mr. Mader's own new work, "Portrait Cycle," is not of great interest and the one movement which I could not understand at all was entitled "Of Understanding!" The kindest thing I can say about Clifford Vaughan's "Symphony" is that it isn't.

8 pm. I don't remember very much about the convention banquet. I think American hospitality must have overwhelmed me a little. In fact the one impression which I am taking back to England is the *friendliness* of this convention, which made a stranger in a strange land feel at ease and at home from the very first. I feel that I have a host of new friends (about 1,500, I believe) and I want to say thank you to all of them and particularly to Robert Baker and the New York City Chapter AGO, my kind and generous hosts for the week.